

# The Facts about Results from the Alaska Measures of Progress Assessment

*Toward preparing students to be college, career and culturally ready graduates.*

## What is AMP?

Students in grades 3 to 10 take the Alaska Measures of Progress (AMP), which assesses students' understanding of the state's standards for English and math.

Students score on a scale that is divided into four achievement levels, 1 to 4, from low to high. Alaska teachers defined the achievement levels.

Students in Level 3 and Level 4 are meeting the standards. Students in Level 1 and Level 2 are partially meeting the standards. Alaska educators recommended the range of scores for each achievement level.

After a review by 200-plus Alaska educators, the state adopted standards in June 2012 that are much more rigorous than our former standards. Because of that, AMP is a more challenging test than our former test, the Standards Based Assessment (SBA).

Students first took AMP in spring 2015. The first year's results will be released in mid-October 2015. In the future, results will be released earlier in the school year.

Results from AMP are not comparable to results from SBA. AMP measures more rigorous standards, using more difficult questions.

AMP does not score students based on how other students perform, in which some students by definition will not do well. Rather, AMP scores students based on how well they perform on the standards. Any number of students could score well enough to meet the standards.

## How is AMP different?

On the AMP tests, students answer fewer multiple-choice questions than in the SBA. In some questions, students must analyze the question, perform multi-step tasks, solve problems, and apply what they know to new situations. In short, AMP does more to measure higher-order thinking.

AMP's reading questions require students to read and understand both fiction and nonfiction, identify central ideas, decide what words mean, and use evidence from the text to support their conclusions. Questions about writing require students to edit and revise texts by putting sentences into logical order, correcting errors in the choice of words, and correcting grammar, punctuation, and spelling.

AMP's math tests require students to explain and apply math concepts and carry out math procedures with precision; solve a range of complex problems; and analyze complex real-world situations and use math models to solve problems.

## Why is AMP important?

Students' scores on AMP in 2015 will serve as a baseline. As students take AMP tests in future years, we can see whether they are growing in their English and math skills.

We are asking students to meet higher expectations. Over time, as students and teachers work with the standards, scores should rise.

Alaska's public schools are charged with preparing students to meet the demands of tomorrow's world. The AMP assessment is how we learn if that charge is being met.

Alaska's current standards are the state's first academic standards to be based on the ideal of high school graduates academically ready for career training, the military, union apprenticeships, and other postsecondary education.

Our goal is that Alaskan graduates be able to fill Alaska's jobs. We have fallen short in academically preparing students for careers and education after high school. Some students who were proficient in our former standards were not well-prepared academically for jobs, training, and education after high school.

Students who meet the standards will be prepared to pass college placement exams in English and math, and they can move directly into college-level work. Those are the college students most likely to graduate.

Students who meet the standards will be prepared to pass the military's written entrance exam, and they will have the English and math skills needed for apprenticeships and technical certificate programs.

AMP scores are just one source of information to help parents and educators decide whether students need more support in English and math. Together, parents and teachers look at the whole student. Students cannot be reduced to a standardized test score. Yet tests have their place in understanding students' needs.

As well, AMP does not replace a teacher's classroom tests. Both types of tests have value. In classroom tests, teachers can quickly check whether students have learned recent lessons. Teachers can adjust instruction in response. Teachers will continue to give homework, classroom assignments, and tests. Teachers will continue to observe students and talk to parents.

AMP gives parents an objective check once a year to see how well their students are meeting the standards. Because AMP summarizes students' achievement toward the end of the

school year, it provides information that can inform schools and districts. As well, parents can check progress from year to year. Parents also can compare their students with the average performance of other students in their school, district, and state.

Please remember:

- There is no failing grade in AMP. Some students are meeting the standards and some students are partially meeting the standards.
- Test scores do not affect grades, graduation, or promotion from one grade to another. The only consequence for students is positive: They will receive support to improve their learning.
- AMP gives students and parents a more realistic understanding of the academic demands of postsecondary education, training, and the workplace.
- Over time, students will be better prepared for postsecondary learning and employment.

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